

Congratulations to everyone entering the 2010 East Midlands in Bloom Competition!

East Midlands in Bloom is the regional competition of 'Britain in Bloom' and has been running for approximately 35 years. The campaign focuses on the three RHS core pillars of horticultural achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation. EMiB have a dedicated team of committee members and judges who give up their time voluntarily to assist with 'In Bloom' events. All are highly experienced in horticulture and are available for a free advisory visit which can be arranged by contacting us.

East Midlands in Bloom will have a Seminar on 16th February 2011 which will be held at the Strutts Centre, Belper Derbyshire to which everyone is welcome to attend. More details will be available on our website: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk and through our annual mailshot which will be sent out later in the year. Please get in touch if you wish to be added to our mailing list.

The Committee and Judges thank you for making superb efforts to the 'In Bloom' Campaign this year and wish you all the best in 2011.

CRITERIA

SECTION A Horticultural Achievement 50% of total marks

SECTION B Environmental Responsibility 25% of total marks

SECTION C Community Participation 25% of total marks

CATEGORY AWARDS

There are five grades of award:-

1. Gold – marks 85% & above (170- 200 points) Outstanding

This is awarded to exceptional achievers who have demonstrated a consistently high standard in all areas of the judging criteria and objectives of Britain in Bloom

2. Silver Gilt - 75-84% (150-169 points) Very Good

This is awarded to an entrant who has met the judging criteria and objectives with a very high standard throughout, and has in one or more areas been exceptionally thorough. This award has the potential to achieve a Gold Award in the future.

3. Silver – 60-74% (120-149 points) Good

This award is for an above average entry, and has met most of the judging criteria and objectives for Britain in Bloom and has displayed the potential to progress to Silver Gilt Award

4. Bronze – 50-59% (100 – 119 points) Average

This is a commendable entry meeting the sustainable standards required, and has the potential to progress to Silver Award.

5. Certificate of Achievement – 0-49% (0-99 points) Fair

This is a fair entry aiming to meet the sustainable standards required, and has the potential to progress to Bronze Award.

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SMALL VILLAGE

Electoral population 300 and under

General Comments

Just two small villages were judged this year. Despite the restrictions of tiny communities, it is heart-warming to see the efforts being made, the obvious pride in surroundings and care for the environment. Well done and keep on achieving!

Judges – Ian Cooke and Mel Henley

ELMTON Silver Award and Category Winner – 129 points

Judged 15th July

*** Judges Award:** For recognising the valuable local heritage and achieving the forthcoming blue plaque for Jedidiah Buxton the 18C mathematician.

The visit to this tiny rural idyllic village occurred on a blustery morning, but despite this, the well-grown hanging baskets were looking colourful. The limestone meadow will be a fantastic natural feature at the entrance to the village when it is managed sensitively as planned. The Wych elm in the Square is maturing well and continues the link to the village's name. The judges tour was completed with a spectacular escape of a flock of sheep down the main street, hotly pursued by the staff of the Elmtree Inn!

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The high quality of the hanging baskets and maintenance, throughout the village.
- There are well maintained open spaces such as The Square and the Village entrance; these provide a sense of arrival and valuable areas complimenting the lifestyle of the village.
- Private gardens are also well maintained with plenty of colour and interest.

SECTION B

- There is a great sense of local heritage and the forthcoming blue plaque will be a significant achievement for this small historic community.
- The whole village presents a very clean appearance.
- Recycling, particularly at the Elmtree is well organised.
- The limestone meadow with its bee orchids and wide diversity of species is a wonderful asset.

SECTION C

- It is amazing that such a wide range of this small community seem to be involved with or support initiatives to improve the village environment and appearance.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- It is suggested that the use of more subtle colours rather than the strong orange African marigolds with red salvias would add to this idyllic rural environment.
- It would be good to see some additional young tree planting in open spaces and on verges to ensure that the treescape is retained for future generations

SECTION B

- Consider ensuring that local heritage information is publicly available on the internet or even as a booklet.
- As the churchyard is now closed, consider making this a richer environment with varying mowing regimes and possible plug planting of local native species.
- The close mowing of the limestone meadow this year and destruction of the bee orchids is disappointing and the contractors responsible need to be managed to ensure that the mowing regime that is planned is adhered to in order to restore this invaluable habitat. Judges are aware of the views of the Bloom Team and this comment supports their aims and objectives to preserve this valuable asset.

SECTION C

- Judges felt that this strong entry could be further enhanced by promoting further communication within the village that shows this campaign to be one that encompasses other activities under the "Bloom banner" rather than activities happening and then being presented to Judges.
- Consider possible fundraising and other Bloom events through the year.
- Consider more use of the internet and press releases to encourage awareness

A=60 B=41 C=28 TOTAL 129

RANBY Bronze Award - 107 points

Judged 14th July

★ **Judges Award:** For the innovative watering device constructed from recycled materials and used for watering the villages hanging baskets.

This village has a long pedigree of success and involvement in the "Bloom Campaign" and this was demonstrated by the two key and energetic people leading in this small and tidy village. The well-filled planters at the bus stops are a colourful greeting to visitors. Despite battles with rabbits, the new allotments are now showing good growth and the potential for a later harvest. There was a wide range of projects for Judges to see.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Grass verges are neatly cut
- Planters around bus stops and opposite the Chequers are colourful.
- The new allotment initiative is to be commended.
- The watering device from recycled materials is ingenious.

SECTION B

- The efforts and results to date in bringing in various pieces of derelict land are to be applauded.
- The new and planned seats are a good investment.

SECTION C

- The cutting of grass by volunteers to free up funding for other work is commendable.
- Village clean-up weekends and volunteer support on some initiatives is good.
- Villagers doing their patch

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- We suggest targeting certain key areas such as the Village Hall grounds which when improved will make a significant impact on your campaign
- Consider showing/developing more sustainable planting such as trees and shrubs.
- The high quality of some displays needs to be more consistent across all displays in order to obtain a higher award.

SECTION B

- It is suggested that efforts might be better focused on completing one of these projects at a time to ensure that the quality is enhanced and completion is achieved more quickly.
- Please research what needs to be done on how to achieve a successful wildflower meadow on the many excellent web sites or books that are available.
- The wild flowers that have sprung up on one of the sites of a new project should be seed harvested to retain this valuable resource before the site is cleared
- Consider more interpretation and promotion of local heritage as resources permit

SECTION C

- Whilst the involvement of the two key supporters is to be commended, it should be a high priority to recruit more top level supporters and organisers to ensure that the Bloom initiative is sustainable.
- More publicity material would greatly enhance the campaign especially using the internet.
- Initiatives such as the garden and sunflower competitions that have ceased should be restarted or alternatives considered providing fresh interest.
- It is understood that a portfolio was in progress; however this needs to be presented to the Judges on the day.

A=55 B=27 C=25 TOTAL 107

VILLAGE

Electoral population 301-1,000

General Comments

There were five entries in this category and overall, a spread of awards from Silver to Gold. The judges were warmly welcomed in each location and enjoyed visiting some lovely gardens and interesting locations. Some amazing achievements from small communities.

Judges – Mel Henley and Ian Cooke

ROSLISTON Gold Award and Category Winner - 176 points

Judged 16th July

*** Judges Award:** For the artistic design of display areas with mixed planting and innovative use of timber and various artefacts.

The visit to this immaculate and colourful village was a true highlight at the end of a busy week's judging. Excellent floral displays contrasted with well managed natural environments and innovative eco buildings. A strong committee, a willing band of volunteers, good use of publicity and close co-operation between all the many players adds up to a very successful campaign and a village that is well worth visiting.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Many excellent areas of well planned floral display incorporating a wide range of plants
- The tunnel and volunteers that grow the plants are to be commended on the quantity and quality produced.
- The pre-school garden with its scarecrows, vegetable, sensory and ornamental plants
- The well maintained private gardens throughout the village
- The colourful borders at the entrance to Chapman's Garden Centre
- The attractive flowers around the Bull and many climbers and wall shrubs

SECTION B

- The consideration given to biodiversity and environmental issues at the Forestry Centre, this is an example of the highest calibre in this area
- The exemplary standards of cleanliness around the village
- The use of recycled containers and artefacts for planting displays
- The garden centre's recycling of plastic pots

SECTION C

- An excellent PowerPoint presentation as introduction to the tour
- A strong committee and large groups of volunteers involved in the Bloom initiative
- The wide range of volunteers involved in various projects
- The Forestry centre's plans for a polytunnel to enable volunteer work to continue in winter
- Chapman Garden Centre's organisation of the Village Show
- Sales of surplus Bloom-grown plants to raise funding
- Year round involvement including planting beds for spring display

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Consider showing judges a churchyard in the future
- Are there any allotments in Rosliston to show the judges?
- Suggest that some of the verges alongside hedges have a more relaxed maintenance for wildlife particularly in the small recreation area

SECTION B

- Consider future judging routes to include a small part of one of the forestry walks
- Further promote and interpret the village's heritage in future as resources permit
- Continue with planned replacement of signs

SECTION C

- Try to provide more information on funding and also estimate of volunteer hours

A=88 B=42 C=46 TOTAL 176

RIDGEWAY Gold Award - 170 points

Judged 15th July

* **Judges Award:** For determination and achievements in the face of some local obstacles to the Bloom campaign

After a break from entering EMiB, this village has returned with renewed energy and presented a very well planned tour with a great deal of interest. Judges were incredibly impressed with the determination in the face of adversity of the Bloom Committee. The new school allotments, used by the children but led by the Bloom initiative, is a wonderful example of co-operative working and skill sharing. The various colourful displays provided highlights throughout the immaculately clean village. The judges appreciated the opportunity to meet key players at the end of the tour.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Horticultural features, beds, borders, baskets in both private gardens and public areas are all high quality and well maintained and very significantly improved.
- The impact at the centre of the village with the Heritage centre, The Swan and other feature was delightful
- The judges would particularly commend the new school allotments and the way in which they are worked with the Bloom team working with the children and running an after school club.
- The maintenance of the Memorial Grounds and bowling green is excellent.

SECTION B

- The Heritage centre with all its resources is a wonderful village facility and it is great that so much heritage information has been recorded and is available on the internet.
- The fishing pond and its picnic site is a good well managed facility and the adjacent SSSI was explained well as a good example of conservation.
- It is good to see that hedgerows and certain areas are managed for wildlife with the inclusion of bird boxes and habitat areas.
- In particular, the general cleanliness of the village, freedom from litter, graffiti, dog-fouling etc is exemplary.

SECTION C

- This village has a strong Bloom team leading a wide spectrum of the community in many activities.
- The many ages involved, from the school children, through to Brownies and Guides, the youth teams painting the bus shelters to the many adult activities.
- There is good use of the press and communication to village members.
- The various winter activities such as the Village Ball are excellent not only in creating funds but keeping the Bloom initiative alive throughout the year.
- Fund-raising in general is very good for a community such as this.
- The Bloom initiative is overall well organised and presented, and in particular the judging day well planned
- A comprehensive portfolio and comprehensive judges' tour.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Undertake more sustainable planting with inclusion of new trees and shrubs.

SECTION B

- More evidence of recycling, possibly public composting areas
- Use of recycled rainwater on some projects might be considered
- We appreciate that with so much to offer it is difficult to consider additions to the route, however we believe that a short excursion into the SSSI would be beneficial

SECTION C

- Whilst the marks in this section indicates very high achievement, it is suggested that to maintain such standards throughout, in future years it would be good to see some advance planning of possible future projects and how they might be achieved. A wish list!

A=82 B=43 C=45 TOTAL 170

ST CRISPIN RETIREMENT VILLAGE Silver Gilt Award - 150 points

Judged 19th July; Judge Mel Henley

* **Judges Award:** For Beryl Harper's outstanding commitment and determination to make a real difference in her community through the "Bloom Campaign".

St Crispin's is truly a delightful place to retire to and with dedicated people like Beryl who leads the Bloom Campaign this place is quite amazing for a first time entry. It has exceeded the standards of the Neighbourhood Awards and is recognised in the Village category in the region. A production nursery services floral displays abundantly placed around the whole village that have a memorable impact to visitors and me as a judge.

The judge was particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The high quality of the hanging baskets and floral displays and maintenance, throughout the village
- The removal of the original supermarket style permanent planting
- The lovely communal garden areas combined with residents doing their areas

SECTION B

- The whole village is exceptionally clean.
- Several accessible well organised clean recycling, areas.
- Water butts, quality build to conserve resources all add to your efforts in sustainability

SECTION C

- So many residents do their patch and more
- Everyone seems to know about the "Bloom" even the Lion!
- Great link with the school
- Beryl is an asset to this community as is the new committed Manager on site

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Continue with your plans to completely eradicate the old style plantings
- Consider the introduction of raised beds to enable those less able to participate more
- Consider the attention to detail in just a few areas where dead or dying plants were present

SECTION B

- Continue to make your case for the development of allotments adjacent to your village
- Develop more habitat areas and increase the range of plants to encourage wildlife
- Consider a small demonstration wild flower area
- Find out more about any heritage on the site and consider interpreting it

SECTION C

- Consider more fundraising and other Bloom events through the year.
- Continue to develop your links with the school and community adjacent to your village
- Could you sell plants outside of the village to help raise more funds
- See if you can set up a "Bloom Committee"

A=80 B=38 C=32 TOTAL 150

TANSLEY: Silver Gilt Award - 150 points

Judged 14th July

★ **Judges Award:** For the exciting new projects in the grounds of the Primary School and the plans to make them sustainable into the future

Tansley is a pretty, well-maintained village with many areas of interest. Seeing the many well conceived and thriving projects at the school was a joy. The walk through the cool shade of Tansley Wood with its streams, waterfalls and pools was a great contrast to the colour of the gardens that demonstrates the range of wonderful features this village has to offer together with the cheerful hanging baskets and the well dressings.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The work at the Primary School with the many different habitats and projects is outstanding.
- Floral displays are appropriate and well maintained, much improved.
- The Sunflower competition and Tansley in Bloom garden competitions are commendable.

SECTION B

- The inclusion of Tansley Wood in the tour shows what a great natural resource this is.
- The almost complete freedom from litter, dog-fouling and graffiti is to be commended especially as this is organised by volunteers.

SECTION C

- The forward planning by the school of its many projects is well conceived.
- The use of the internet, posters and printed material to publicise Bloom is good.
- The portfolio is excellent.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- It would be good to see more business premises, tourist attractions or other areas used by the public.
- More sustainable planting including trees and shrubs should be considered.
- Some attention to the detail to the maintenance of the permanent planting areas at the bottom pub would enhance this commercial area

SECTION B

- It would be good to see more readily available information on the mill and the water works that fed them, possibly interpretation panels and/or a printed trail.
- Continue with your plans to develop the woods and interpretation thereof.
- Create a wish list to present to the Borough Council for the spending of the pending Section 106 developer contribution

SECTION C

- It would be good to see more evidence of winter projects such as bulb or tree planting, ditch cleaning etc and possibly events to raise additional funding or sponsorship.

A=74 B=38 C=38 TOTAL 150

MIDDLETON BY WIRKSWORTH Silver Award - 123 points

Judged 16th July

♥ **Countryside Companions Award for Best Wildflower & Conservation Area**

For the restored and working beam engine and fascinating heritage displays at Middleton Top Visitor Centre

★ **Judges Award:** For recognition and protection of slow worm, frog and toad habitats at the allotment site

This is only the second entry from this village that oozes with industrial heritage and a great deal has been achieved in a short time. The wildflowers in the quarry and historic beam engine were a fascinating start to the tour. The Reflective Garden at the School has a wide range of colourful planting and the judges were impressed by wildlife conservation at the allotments. It was good at the end of the morning to meet key players in the more formal surroundings of the colourful Millennium Garden.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The range of plants in the Reflective garden at the School, and the allotment
- The well kept allotments and plans for expansion and a community orchard
- The part completed improvements to the Village Hall surrounds are good.

SECTION B

- The excellent wildflowers and nature areas in the old quarry at the Visitor centre
- The fascinating old beam engine and remains of the historic railway
- The use of a volunteer litter picker as well as the Village caretaker
- The protection of habitats in the allotment area
- The excellent interpretation boards in the school playground, the nest boxes and webcams
- A clean and comprehensive recycling centre

SECTION C

- A strong Bloom committee and large group of volunteers
- The regular and informative newsletter
- Obtaining a cultivation license in order to plant bulbs in certain areas
- An impressive, well presented portfolio and effective plans for future projects

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- The quality of the floral displays needs to be considered with concentrated colour and the sides planted to hide containers and give fullness to them
- Consider using the resources put in to the many small potted plants dotted round village to create one or two displays of higher impact
- The design of floral areas in Village Green would benefit from fewer but larger beds again to improve the impact.
- Parts of Millennium Garden planting are declining and the mares tail needs treating
- Try to tidy up some areas that were a little unkempt as your campaign develops

SECTION B

- The management of the orchid verge needs consideration to remove invasive weeds and excessive shade
- The Heritage of quarrying and stone working could be given more emphasis as resources permit

SECTION C

- Continue to work towards a Bloom website
- Continue to build on sponsorship and funding drives to fund new projects
- Continue with winter events and projects to sustain Bloom awareness and fundraising

A=51 B=37 C=35 TOTAL 123

LARGE VILLAGE

Electoral population 1,001-2,500

General Comments

We were pleased to visit six committed communities, one of which was a new entrant, having been a Neighbourhood in 2009; standards were high and we were pleased that the comments from the judges in 2009 had all been acted upon where the opportunity was available.

Judges – Jeff Bates, Alan Fletcher and Martin Hardy

DONINGTON Gold Award and Category Winner- 173 points

Judged 6th July; Judges Jeff Bates and Alan Fletcher

The visit to this community on the Western fringe of the South Holland fens took place on a warm and sunny morning, and the well-planned tour, with a mix of driving and walking, was able to show the tremendous efforts being made to develop community spirit and engagement through the medium of the Bloom. Jenny Bailey and Liz Walker led the tour, ably assisted by other members of the considerable bloom community; by the end of the tour we were convinced of the commitment of all parties to ensure their village thrives.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Amongst many notable points the judges must comment in particular the quite magnificent floral containers, some of the best we have ever seen, carefully displayed in prominent and appropriate places around the village and cared for on a rota system by 14 of the 'bloomers' and a grant-funded trainee. The Market Place and the baskets outside Bates Environmental were stunning, and we were pleased to note that the company sponsors and maintains the baskets outside their offices. Tulipland Butchers, the Black Swan, the Black Bull, Browntoft B&B and numerous other businesses were also directly involved in the bloom efforts.
- Attractive front gardens were viewed on Mill Lane, Lindum Way and Orchard Close and we were also impressed with the progress of the garden in the grounds of St Mary and the Holy Rood Church.

SECTION B

- The use of rain-water harvesting at several significant places is an excellent development, especially given the number of containers that you have. Your 'Matthew Flinders' linked activities have continued to develop and the statue with interpretation board and paved reliefs is very impressive. The start of the tour, visiting the 'garden' of Margaret Smith, brought an entirely unexpected aspect of conservation and biodiversity to the judges attention. The village is almost spotlessly clean – no established litter, graffiti, fly-posting or dog-fouling observed at any stage and a programme of street cleaning well-established.

SECTION C

- Outstanding levels of fund-raising – in particular that derived from searching out small grants – have to be noted, as must the wonderful local support of everyone. As well as your 'main' team, you have the engagement of students from the Thomas Cowley school in assisting with gardening at the Ruby Hunt Multi-Use Centre, and the young folks managing the Flinders Teen Park and assisting with general horticultural maintenance. Bloom communication, via the IDEA newsletter, is excellent, and we were pleased to note the presence of the local newspaper.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- We were pleased that the main A52 roundabout is now enhanced and sponsored, but you may wish to move to a more sustainable planting style in this busy location; the existing 'heavy' central planting could usefully be altered to something more in-keeping with current styles.
- Continue the development of the Churchyard garden, where the combination of shade and dryness may make alternative planting choices to e.g. Hebe, more appropriate.

SECTION B

- The potential allotment site is an excellent initiative which we whole-heartedly support. If at all possible, try to minimise the impact of vacant property on the main street, and encourage the pub on the way into the village from the A52 to do a little more weeding on its front gardens. The 'old' interpretation board in the Market Place is in need of a little care and attention.

SECTION C

- Try to involve more children and schools in the competition and provide evidence
- Consider including a route map, itinerary, page numbers and more spring photos in next year's portfolio

A = 86 B = 42 C = 45 Total 173

SAPCOTE Silver Gilt Award - 155 points

Judged 13th July; Judges Jeff Bates and Martin Hardy

* **Judges Award:** For the enthusiasm and commitment of Sapcote in Bloom volunteers

After joining the Bloom as a Neighbourhood group, Sapcote in Bloom have taken to blooming as a duck to water! Wet weather did not for a moment lower the enthusiasm of the team, where the efforts of so many were so clearly evident on a village tour done entirely on foot. Amongst so many excellent features the startlingly good presentations by the children from All Saints School have to be picked out as special. A remarkable first entry to East Midlands in Bloom – well done!

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Almost too many good things to mention here, but the bed of New Guinea Impatiens beneath the Village Sign, complemented by the run of circular beds – placed to give colour for the adjacent 'sheltered' bungalows to view – is lovely. We also liked the Antirrhinums along the base of the fence on Hinckley Road. Good 'business' improvement and involvement was seen at the Sapcote Club, the Co-op and the Red Lion. Numerous residential gardens were lovely, including those on Park Road and of course at Dairy Cottage; whilst the latter is not on view to the public, as it 'opened' for you to raise funds for Sapcote in Bloom we are happy that it can be counted within the judging.
- Verges and parks are well-cared for, with evidence in the portfolio of appropriate bulb planting for the winter / spring season

SECTION B

- What a clean and attractive village! You have enhanced the pretty setting with the village sign, and by working with the Wesleyan Chapel to develop the garden there. Your portfolio demonstrates the pride you have for the historic buildings of the town, and the Church spire seems to be visible from everywhere.

SECTION C

- A fantastic effort! The banners could not be missed – and we also noted that you had contacted everyone on the route to alert them to the judging tour and their contribution. It was lovely to note the enthusiasm of so many people – the garden on Park Road (the gentleman was unable to come out to see us due to ill-health) was superb.
- The main 'bloomers' – Dianne Brannan, Derek Forster, Chris Phillips, Pat Clarke and others – just exuded pride in the village. And then there was the All Saints School, where Alex, Molly, Chloe and Luke were so full of pride in what the school has achieved since Sapcote in Bloom has begun to work with them; the Peace Garden is lovely, and the start with the nature trail, composting etc is very good; most of all though it was just the enthusiasm and understanding of role that came across from the young people.

Areas suggested for future development

SECTION A

- Now that you have the principles in place of village improvement via the Bloom, perhaps you can begin to move towards some use of colourful perennial planting to reduce maintenance and environmental impact; the small triangular area opposite Sapcote Club would be an ideal place to begin, where you would also cut out the need for difficult mowing at the same time. Easy, cheerful perennials such as Heuchera, Dicentra and Pulmonaria, perhaps with spring and summer bulbs to add impact, should work there.

SECTION B

- Would it be possible to include the war memorial and church in the judging tour? We appreciated passing the historic almshouses but other historic features were largely absent on the visit.
- Whilst the village is very clean, there was a little graffiti opposite the school, and you should contact the local authority to see if they can provide you with a 'removal kit' so that you are able to deal with the problems immediately they are noticed. At the achievement level you have now

reached, you should also note that weeds in gutters – e.g. along Sharnford Road – become more visible.

SECTION C

- Try to get at least one local newspaper to join you on judging day; you may also consider starting a Sapcote in Bloom website.
- The portfolio is very good; as you refine it, try to carefully address each point in the marking criteria.

A = 77 B = 35 C = 43 Total = 155

BARLBOROUGH Silver Gilt Award - 151 points

Judged on 5th July; Judges Jeff Bates and Irene Bates

*** Judges Award:** For the splendid carved bear sculpture on the Green

The well organised Bloom group led by Hilary Gilmour met the judges at the Resource Centre where a photo shoot and briefing took place before we embarked on an enjoyable walk around the picturesque old village much enhanced by the wonderful floral features. Later in the tour we made use of the comprehensive road network to visit the Country Park and the Barlborough Links commercial centre. A really excellent effort this year by all involved.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The village has many attractive, well maintained open spaces and on several areas include good permanent planting to add colour and interest; these include 'Doreen's Garden', the Village Hall garden and the splendid and colourful open front gardens on Park View – an area of mainly warden controlled sheltered housing. We must also mention the open-plan fronts on the residential areas of Barlborough Links and the structural planting on the Links Business areas, with the planting at Dobbies (perhaps unsurprisingly) being especially colourful.
- We are also pleased to see that the entrances to the village are marked by floral features on the verges, and that these are accompanied by well-placed seats.

SECTION B

- Given that the village is on a major trunk route and just off the M1 motorway it was exceptionally clean! We were also pleased to find no evidence of dog-fouling and only a single (minor) example of graffiti.
- The Country Park has developed an excellent range of wildlife; it would be lovely to see this as part of the tour and not just in the portfolio.
- The Blue Plaques recognising the history of the village are excellent.

SECTION C

- The portfolio shows you maintain excellent levels of enthusiasm and ideas for further enhancement of the community; there was no doubt of the commitment to the cause of so many people in the village, where partnerships between individuals, churches, business and local authority are strong. We were pleased to note many areas of engagement with young people, and also with older residents of the village – especially Joan Lavin.
- The prominently placed Bloom certificates on the notice board outside Slayley Green.

Areas suggested for future development

SECTION A

- There are many floral containers around the village; the planting styles used are very striking, but perhaps a little overdone for an essentially rural setting.
- Roundabouts are sponsored and colourful with bedding plants; given that these busy areas are very difficult to maintain, you may wish to increase the amount of architecturally-styled permanent planting – for example using grasses, summer bulbs and drought-tolerant shrubs such as Lavender – which would be equally striking but less maintenance-intensive
- The Apollo and Dusty Miller public houses, and Stone Croft B&B, are attractively enhanced; the prominently positioned 'De Rodes Arms' could perhaps do more.

SECTION B

- While the presence of so many seats is excellent, some do need a little care to make them more welcoming; we also noted that the condition of the older barrels is deteriorating somewhat (though you should note that we do feel these are an entirely appropriate type of container for such as rural

setting). The other feature that detracts – since it is such a feature of the tour – is the condition of the railings along the walk past the church.

- We were pleased to observe composting in the Resource Centre garden; could you try to ensure that the compost used in containers is peat-free or peat-reduced.
- The 'closed' churchyard is maintained as mown grass; it may have great potential to be in part maintained as a wildflower meadow.
- Develop links with Conservation organisations in respect of the lake at Barlborough Links.

SECTION C

- Continue to develop sponsorships wherever possible; also continue to broaden awareness of the Bloom by engaging directly with the smaller businesses in the 'old' village (shop, hairdresser, fitness centre) to complement the strength of the links with community groups

A = 74 B = 38 C = 39 Total = 151

CAISTOR Silver Award - 149 points

Judged 6th July; Judges Jeff Bates, Alan Fletcher & Irene Bates

*** Judges Award:** The grounds of St Peters and St Pauls Churchyard

The judges arrived at Caistor nestled on the western edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds on a glorious July afternoon. This large village entry looked inviting from the moment we saw the first Caistor signs at the entrance to the village, after meeting with chair person Deborah Barker and her very enthusiastic committee and volunteers who supported the Caistor in Bloom entry we proceeded on the route.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The White Hart public house, the planting around the village pump complimented by baskets and containers outside of the residential properties were very colourful contrasting against both colour washed walls or the rustic brick buildings. Various gardens en route were a pleasure to see, from a topiary elephant to a national collection of Crocosmia, a gem. The visit to Sealord cannot pass without mention, the manicured grass, lovely floral containers and Carp pond was undoubtedly the most welcoming fish processing site I have ever visited.

SECTION B

- The walk up Church Folly beneath the magnificent tree's then into the grounds of St Peters and St Paul's was a delight. The wildlife area within the church yard, the photographic evidence of the spring bulbs, the further work to plant ferns along with the tree planting will all add to the attractiveness of this area throughout the year. The installation of the interpretation board ensures that visitors are now aware of the flora and fauna to be found in this tranquil haven and are easily identified. The project to clean out and replant the pond at Westbrook Grove pond has totally transformed the area. And will remain a prominent feature for many years to come.

SECTION C

- A strong community spirit exists in Caistor which was clearly demonstrated throughout the judging route. Clearly the previous concerns around litter and weeds have been dealt with by all sections of community taking responsibility.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- The future works planned for around the new seating areas within the market place will further enhance the area. Once the alterations are complete next to the library the work planned to reinstate the planters will raise that areas profile. Careful consideration needs to be taken with choice of plants for the new Co Op construction to ensure that it is in keeping with a development of its scale in Caistor.

SECTION B

- Look to include the children at the primary school giving them the opportunity to speak with the judges to discuss with them the work they are doing in regard to the environment and the growing of vegetables at school. Consideration could be given to suitable sustainable planting on the steep embankments which are a concern nationally due to the strict health and safety guidelines which have now been put in place nationally.

SECTION C

• It is apparent that there are numerous projects in the pipeline which need to be evidenced within next year's judging tour. Foundations are now firmly in place to take Caistor to the next level within the East Midlands in Bloom competition which with the continued support from all sections of the community this will be an exciting journey.

A = 77 B = 37 C = 35 Total 149

KIRTON IN LINDSEY Silver Award - 128 points

Judged 12th July; Judges Jeff Bates, Martin Hardy and Irene Bates

★ **Judges Award:** The environmental and community activities by students from Huntcliff Technology College

Despite unseasonable wet weather the charms of this spectacularly set village in North Lincolnshire were clear to see. We were quickly introduced to the refurbished Town Hall by Cllr Pat Frankish, before touring the village by car and on foot, including the opportunity to meet staff and pupils of the Huntcliff Technology College and view their environmental and community activity. The tour concluded with refreshments and the chance to meet other members of the village, including the mayor, at the lovely village green.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Lovely residential gardens abound in the village, e.g. Barnard Meadows, Fairfields, Cornwall Street and Bader Way; we appreciated the open-plan frontages of the new and newish developments.
- There are many small floral borders in the verges around the town, mostly undertaken in partnership with North Lincs DC and their contractor Continental Landscapes.
- Attractive floral baskets were on view at Premier News and the Royal Oak public house.
- The market place has added floral enhancement to complement the renovated Victorian Town Hall

SECTION B

- The increasing work at the Huntcliff Technology College is excellent and should be encouraged; the keyhole garden, linking education to third world issues of food and environment is good, as is the bug hotel.
- The recycling site is clean and tidy, as are the streets, where the well-timed NLDC litter pick was clearly effective.
- Bedding plants are grown in peat-free compost – well done.
- Verge mowing, by NLDC, is done so as to maximise the area kept long for wildlife benefit.

SECTION C

- Well done for getting the school involved in bulb-planting around the village! Excellent work which should continue – and the junior school could also get involved in this.
- We were pleased with the links to Klassic and the Women's Institute.
- It is good to note in your portfolio that you have future plans, and that you have begun to address some of the suggestions which followed last year's EMiB judging.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- The floral beds around the village have been planted rather late and have established slowly; we would also point out that their style is dated and the outcome flat. It would be worth viewing the styles and quality of bedding displays in other villages, to inspire you to get greater impact in these high-profile areas. You may also wish to gradually reduce the number of small beds; fewer, larger beds would create greater impact. In due course it would be sensible to change some of the styles to perennial floral planting, reducing the need for watering and costs of maintenance.
- We approve of the enhanced floral features on the Market Place; again however, the planting is late and rather bland.
- Try to encourage more businesses in the village to get involved; also try to do more of the tour on foot so as to allow the existing business involvement to be easily viewed.

SECTION B

- Street furniture is not well-maintained, with most in need of a good scrub, for example in the cemetery. Paved areas of the Market Place are also a little weedy, detracting from the general appearance.

- The closed cemetery in the churchyard is a lovely resource in the centre of the village, where there is already an area of grass on a bank that is left to grow longer; you should consider developing a genuine wild-flower meadow (perennial, not cornfield) to enhance the area for appearance and wildlife.
- The new tree-planting, due this winter, should focus on areas such as Ings Lane Sportsfield; again, you may wish to work with the Wildlife Trust or other similar groups to create complete habitats in such areas.

SECTION C

- Make the portfolio more reflective of the three core pillars of the 'Bloom', and focus pictures on the seasons that are not present on the day – the spring bulbs being an obvious example.
- Try to increase the involvement of the business community in improving their frontages.
- Develop greater community involvement in the Bloom campaign; this will energise progress in achieving your goals; this is an ideal time, as all the energy that so successfully achieved the Town Hall renovation can now move into these areas instead.

A = 62 B = 33 C = 33 Total 128

ASFORDBY – Silver Award - 123 points

Judged 13th July; Judges Jeff Bates, Martin Hardy and Irene Bates

♥ East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Most Improved Entrant

We were met at the village hall by Nigel, Teresa, Daphne and Tom, members of the Bloom Committee, and Parish Clerk Lorraine. After our initial introduction we set off on a walking tour of the village. We were shown their new planting and planters at Riverside Walk, the village school and lovely gardens at Bradgate Flats. The outstanding wild flower meadow now includes a new wildlife pond. It was clear from the tour that the Bloom is making good strides in the village and that enthusiasm for your community is strong.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- There were many good front gardens and the Bloom Committee have encouraged this by publicising the Bloom entry. Bradgate Flats was particularly impressive, with a difficult sloping site planted with a mix of shrubs, perennials and exotic annuals. The allotments are in big demand (with a waiting list) and are well cultivated. Containers around prominent areas of the Village add colour – notably outside the Village Hall and at Riverside Walk – and the new planting at this open space in the village centre will add greatly to the interest. The display of floral containers at the Crown and baskets at the Horsehoes are good, as are baskets at Asfordby News.

SECTION B

- Excellent wild flower meadow, managed very well. The new pond area is beginning to develop well, although the water level was low due to the dry weather. Further plantings around the area will increase the diversity of wildlife. The interpretation board at this site is excellent.

SECTION C

- Work has started on the school garden at Captains Close Primary School and getting the children involved around the pond is a good idea. The ongoing project of hedge planting and developments of the pond should be continued and other members of the community encouraged to join in. We were impressed by the progress you are now making, with the developments at Riverside Walk bringing the Bloom directly into the Village.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- More planting of baskets and tubs around monuments and buildings would be a good idea and add more colour to the village. Try to plan the judging route carefully to show your village to the best; it is also useful to check the route shortly before judging to reduce visible weeds etc that were seen in car parks and other open areas. Encourage the other businesses to get involved – the Empress of India is in a prime and appropriate location; the entrance to Asfordby Haulage would also be easily enhanced.

SECTION B

- Litter, graffiti and dog fouling problems are evident in some areas, especially the Glendon Close play area and verges on Saxilby Road; we feel that you should make greater efforts in particular to address responsible dog-owning at the Meadow. More use could be made of the area around the

heritage site of the butter cross e.g by adding containers and perhaps an interpretation board (for which grant-aid may well be available). Whilst the meadow is wonderful there may be scope to engage Leicestershire Wildlife Trust in discussions about a varied mowing regime to further bio-diversity.

SECTION C

- Consider starting a school gardening club with possibly competitions for tallest sunflower for example, which will help encourage the children to partake in the Village in Bloom campaign. Try to use the village notice boards to raise the profile of your work and the Bloom campaign. Encourage the local newspaper to visit you and promote your efforts to encourage pride in your community.

A = 61 B = 28 C = 34 Total 123